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DEPT FOR AF/PD TIJEN AYBAR; LYNN ALISON; LYNN ROCHE, PATRICIA  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [OIIP](#) [AO](#) [GB](#)

SUBJECT: GABON: FIRST DANIEL PEARL WORLD MUSIC DAYS A POPULAR AND  
DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS

¶1. (U) Summary. The first-ever Gabonese Daniel Pearl World Music Days celebration was held in Libreville from November 17-20, with the participation of partner embassies Spain, Japan, Korea, and France making it truly a multicultural event. A two-night music and film festival was open to the public at the local American School, the film biopic "A Mighty Heart" was broadcast on local television, and a concert for local students was held at the Ambassador's residence. For a Public Diplomacy-lite post, the week-long events required a strong team effort, which was rewarded with equally strong praise from participants, partners, and the public alike. End Summary.

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A JOINT EFFORT  
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¶2. (U) Embassy Libreville invited several diplomatic missions to join us in the inaugural Daniel Pearl events to truly convey the message of music transcending borders. The Korean Embassy contributed a performance of traditional Korean drumming and an accompanying exhibition of the instruments used in the film. The Japanese Embassy provided a modern selection of "J-pop" videos screened during the mini film festival. The French Embassy donated a musical documentary about the cultural heart of Paris, Montmartre. The Spanish Embassy provided the film biography of celebrated flamenco singer Camaron that entertained the Gabonese viewers.

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SPREADING THE HARMONY  
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¶3. (U) To promote the message "Harmony for Humanity", Embassy Libreville turned to creative and innovative ways to raise awareness of Daniel Pearl and his foundation's purpose. Post enlisted IVLP alumnus and local popular political cartoonist, Lybek, to educate the public regarding Daniel Pearl's life and death. A series of five strips ran in the largest local paper "L'union" featuring themes of multiculturalism, musical diversity, and standing up for one's beliefs. American graphic artist Sonya Soroko/Grey Hat Designs donated a striking design featuring the flags of participant countries. Post printed hundreds of t-shirts, which were given out to promote the events and to every program attendee. Post sent printed programs and brochures in advance to local schools and our diplomatic partners. PD Officer appeared on a popular local midday television program to talk about Daniel Pearl and the philosophy behind the events. She also was interviewed on pan-African radio station Africal and local network RTN, in addition to newspaper coverage.

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MUSIC IS THE MESSAGE  
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¶4. (U) Post obtained permission from Paramount Studies to broadcast "A Mighty Heart" on television in Gabon on November 19. The week ended with an early evening concert at the Ambassador's residence on November 20. Invited schoolchildren and their parents joined

representatives from the diplomatic community to enjoy the Martin Luther King School Choir's traditional song, dance, and an inspiring sketch whose resounding refrain "Yes we can!" was shouted en mass by the enthusiastic audience.

¶5. (U) Kuomi Gabon, a local youth group dedicated to improving multicultural understanding, brought hearing-impaired children to dance to traditional and modern songs that they "heard" through vibrations in the stage against their bare feet. The message of understanding and appreciating our differences was starkly illustrated as the deaf children danced and amazed with acrobatic feats in time to sounds they could not hear, only feel.

¶6. (U) Post did not have to look far for a headliner for the evening. Community Liaison Officer and singer Megan Clark, wowed the crowd with a strong selection of American popular songs. The children were so carried away that they joined Clark on stage as background singers, dancing and liberally peppering her American country-tinged vocals with their own musical flavor. It was a perfect example of how music defies national boundaries, transcends cultural differences, and brings people together to share a great time.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (U) Gabon's first participation in the annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days was a success, with strong media coverage, wide local participation, and most importantly, showing by example that music transcends cultural and political borders to bring people together. Participating embassies involved found the experience rewarding and look forward to next year's events. The Korean Ambassador personally thanked Embassy Libreville for providing a forum to share his culture. The Daniel Pearl Foundation called it a "truly amazing event" which no one in Libreville would ever forget. It is our hope that in the future, perhaps with more resources (both financial and human), we can expand the program to Sao Tome and include additional diplomatic partners in the events. End Comment.